

**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND  
STATE OF DELAWARE**

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**April 6, 2018 MEETING MINUTES**

**Welcome and Call to Order:** Chair Lloyd Schmitz welcomed everyone to the meeting. Recognizing a quorum, Lloyd called the meeting to order at the Smyrna Rest Stop at 5500 DuPont Pkwy in Smyrna, DE at 10:00 am.

**Roll Call**

**Council Members:** Council Chair Lloyd Schmitz, Pat Carzo, Patti Addison, Ken Rolph, Deidre Morris, Kat Bottner. **Absent:** Jillian Queen

**DVI Staff:** Debbie Harrington, Deputy Director, Michele Hamilton, Jill Morrison, Erin Weaver

**Public:** Rob Keller, Mary Marsh, Wayne Marsh, BEP

**Minutes, February 2, 2018:** Motion to accept made by Ken Rolph, and second by Deidre Morris. Motion carried.

**Director's Report-** Debbie Harrington, Deputy Director  
Debbie stated her resignation with DVI would be effective April 6, 2018.

Students with visual impairments receiving education services: 295  
Individuals receiving employment services (Vocational Rehabilitation): 310  
Individuals receiving Independent Living Services and services for the Older Blind: 150  
Orientation and Mobility Services: 185  
Assistive technology assessment and training services: 37

**BEP:**

Smyrna Gift Shop currently does not have an operator and will be under the direction of Rob Schmidtkofer and Bill DeGraffenreid. Products will be Delaware based products, purchased wholesale and less on consignment. Discussion on profitability of the gift shop was pursued with Blind Vendors Committee and it was agreed that a review will be done through November 2018 before a final decision is made. We are working on obtaining additional products. Part of the delay was that Linda Eden initially was to be operator of the Smyrna Gift Shop, but has decided not to.

BEP/BVC held their committee meeting March 22, 2018- discussed Strategic Planning and the proposed changes for the Randolph Shepard Act

DTCC: Linden Eden will be the new operator for this site; she has completed training and has a one year probationary period.

Carvel Location: Inspections in process, moving forward to opening this location. This location closed on 24<sup>th</sup> of February due to issues with infestation of the building that public health was concerned with not just the café but the entire building. There are updates being done to the café and requirements from public health are being managed.

Profit and loss (P&L) statement for February and March coming out in May - Jill Morrison will forward to Lloyd Schmitz

**Vocational Rehabilitation**

Current caseload: 268.

Total individuals employed: 10.

The number of successful closures for FY 2018 is 2 individuals employed more than 90 days and 10 individuals that are currently employed less than 90 days.

There are 34 individuals that are ready to work.

There are 78 individuals that are currently in training or a higher education program.

Transition-age students ages 14-21: 81.

Transition-age students ages 14-24: 102.

The Transition Student Spring Break took place from April 4<sup>th</sup> through April 6<sup>th</sup> with students from age fourteen to nineteen participating this year. Division staff from the Independent Living Services, Technology Center, and Vocational Rehabilitation Units provided meaningful activities to support the students in their everyday living experiences focusing on vocational and assistive technology needs. There were approximately nine students that participated in the activities throughout the three-day period. The students were also provided an opportunity to travel to the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) organization in Baltimore where they were able to meet with the First Vice-President of the organization and explore new and innovative technology which included a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) component as part of the activities presented.

### **Independent Living Services**

Attended the Transition to Adult Life Expo held at the Chase Center in Wilmington, Purpose to inform parents of the community programs, resources available for the students to transition to adult life.

Scheduled Upcoming Events, April 18th – Active 55+ Expo, Dover Downs; April 20th – Labeling and Organization, both DVI location

**Instructional Resource and Material Center**, Men with a Message produced in February 1,371 braille pages, 220 graphic pages and 85 digital pages. DVI is representative of the Instructional Material along with DOE and Delaware University, there is discussion about transitioning the inputting of all requirements into the system, and the TVI's have started the digital aspect of the training. They are trying to find that system between DVI and Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) to be sure to track and report on books and materials for visually impaired students. DOE sent out a letter encouraging the Districts to have their book list in by May 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Volunteer Program** provided internships and volunteer's opportunities for Agencies in March for a total of 374 hours. DVI received interns in the Program for the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit. These are interns from the Universities.

Lloyd Schmitz requested Jill Morrison have FISCAL attend the council meeting next month and do a presentation on how funding is derived and distributed. Debbie Harrington explained that FISCAL does not administer the funding they only execute according to program managers. Our program managers attend council meetings and may talk with the council about their funding of services. The FISCAL Sr. Officer does the reports in conjunction with Program Managers.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Advisor Committee-VRAC's** Chair, cancelled April's council meeting. The VRAC held their retreat on March 16 and March 17th. It was held at the Delaware School for the Deaf. The retreat had a very good turnout. DVI used the Zoom Program for this retreat town hall. Lloyd suggested considering accommodations for all parts of the state, so that individuals may attend without leaving their house. This should be extended to DVI activities, workshops and events as well.

### **Education-Erin Weaver**

280 currently servicing

22 new referrals since the beginning of 2018

8 Professional Development Days directed to address strategic plan outcomes

Three committees (The outreach committee, Family Night Activities, and Communication Committee) created to address parents with infants and children of the blind and visually impaired assistants programs, with development and education.

Family night held monthly, at both locations (Milford & New Castle) except for the month of July.

First Family night three (3) families participated, it was held on March 16, the topic was requested from the parents, the night centered on Braille. The parents were provided with take home resources.

Extended Core Curriculum (ECC) - skills and concepts which sighted children pick up on the activities, our children don't unfortunately have that experience so the ECC set up 9 areas which we intentionally teach those skills which are normally picked up by sight.

Council members who would like a copy of the strategic plan develop by the task force committee may contact Jill Morrison at DVI.

August meeting will occur during the day and will be a family picnic, one location middle of the state.

Parent Outreach Committee- develops and disseminates what our outreach is; ask for feedback of topics of family interest. Pursuing ways to provide information related to Educational issues drawn through the means of social media. They are also working on developing a parent PTO.

Communication Committee - Working on setting up a link to DVI website where parents can ask questions to our TVIs and receive an answer back. Also developing a Newsletter, no decision on whether this will be monthly.

One good outcome from developing these committees is that the students have developed a student council. They have their structure and are deciding on whether to use family night as their meeting night. Utilize the student council to bring volunteers who would like to mentor or tutor our students.

DVI website - education is trying to utilize all means of communications.

Question arose that why is BlindSight's event not on DVI's website. An event may not be on DVI's website if it is not State based, Jill Morrison will check into this.

Assistive Technology - Assistive Technology Association conference, braille note training follow up training quarterly throughout the year. Student would come in and work with the DVI trainer at the same time. Training occurred at Cape Henlopen School with TVI and staff. Training plans continue to proceed for other high schools that we have students.

Compensatory time: one (1) student remains, working with that student, family and District.

## **Orientation & Mobility**

194 clients

36 new referrals in 2018

They have participated in Professional Development. Develop consistency of evaluation in all areas of direct and indirect services to clients. These are being implemented for each client, shared with the client and IEP team members. This will take a full year to implement with each student and the adult timeline is still be worked on. TVI and O&M are working collaboratively for each client addressed. O&M instructor are being participated in technology training specific to a client. Training will be ongoing, meetings are mandatory. Lloyd Schmitz would like to have DVI promote more independence when traveling. Will provide training as needed.

Compensatory time plan in place and has been implemented.

O&M instructors- 4 full time & 1 Casual Seasonal

Contractors- 1 full time – 1 part time

Positions allocated – 2 open (6 allocated for)

Recruitment with AER, Several Universities, Conference time specific for job openings, different meetings involved in. University of Pittsburgh has our contact information, once ready to place students..

14 TVI's

6 certified through Delaware

8 emergency certified and involved through University of Nebraska and Kutztown University, three (3) attending Kutztown University will complete by end of summer and intern in the fall

### **Old Business**

#### **Joint Finance Committee (JFC) update - Debbie Harrington**

DVI asked for \$219,000 which would be the Governor's authorized budget for Teachers, did ask and awaiting response. The committee asked questions, about Teachers, why it was difficult to find teachers; we responded that there is not a program in Delaware; we have no mechanism in Delaware to provide for teachers. Questions on Compensatory time, Books and materials how we produced them and how we get them on time; we responded in terms of what we are doing with DOE and the University of Delaware. The public comments were mostly about the same thing (teachers), tracking and how well our students performed.

Budget projections for next year, no response heard.

DVI Position Vacancies

Education Administrative Specialist – filled

VR Sr. Council – filled

Front Desk – filled, casual seasonal

Deputy Director- OPEN, position posted

#### **DIB- Debbie Harrington**

DIB Closed

National Industries for the Blind took over the Contracts.

1 employee retired

NO state employee is on DIB payroll

### **New Business**

#### **Public Comments- none**

#### **Comments from the floor**

Patti Addison, BlindSight, update – are doing new programming with volunteers looking to do some programming though out the state. BlindSight put out a newsletter and will be putting out a newsletter again in June.

Pattie is expanding Peer Support Program VA. Elsmere facility. BlindSight Store is going back on the Road. Will be sponsoring children to attend Capabilities, They will be sponsoring Bell Academy.

DABA- Bowling Event, Beach House in May, Cruise to Bahamas in a few weeks. September is Bike to the Bay. Any questions you can contact Patti Addison by phone or online.

Independent Resources- Ken Rolph

Independent Ball held at the Chase Center; sit down dinner, \$60.00 a ticket being held on November 2, 2018  
Deidre Morris attended last year and strongly encourages everyone to attend. Fantastic Time!

Independent Resources is trying to expand and is doing more technology with students and anyone who is interested. They are not contracted with DVI but has had discussions.

Independent Living Advisory Committee (ILAC) – Wayne Marsh, committee has one or two (2) vacancies

Vocational Rehabilitation Advisory Council (VRAC) – Lloyd Schmitz requested Jill Morrison to find out what vacancies are needed to be filled. Some individuals who were at the retreat expressed interest in being on a committee.

Everyone wished Debbie Harrington the Best in her endeavors.

**Motion to adjourn:** Deidre Morris motioned to adjourn and second by Patti Addison. Motion carried.

**Adjournment:** Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 12:10PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Michele Hamilton